1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920) 1932
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XXXIII

THE TALENSE

History; Tribal, Clan, and Soog' *Organization*

INTRODUCTORY: The Talense occupy the area shown on the map. According to the 1921 census report they number 29,972 persons of both sexes. Specimens of the language, called Talene or Talen', have been given in Chapter III. Their appearance, their houses, customs, religion, and organization all seem to me to be very similar to those of their neighbours, the Nankanse. Their languages, too, are very much alike. Had the Talense not been labelled with a separate appellation, I doubt if the anthropologist—save after, perhaps, a very minute investigation—would have considered it necessary to deal with them as a group distinct from the Namnam and the Nankanse. Nevertheless, in accordance with the plan which I mapped out, I have done so. Rites and customs, already investigated, discussed, and described, are here approached from a different angle. Results so obtained are always valuable, even where there is a certain inevitable repetition. The process serves also to fill gaps in the work which has gone before, to which the information obtained later may be considered as supplementary.

In dealing with this and the remainder of the tribes, I have endeavoured to group my facts, as far as possible, under the chapter headings already adopted. This arrangement will enable my readers the more readily to piece together the sum total of the data available concerning any one particular subject, and I hope will mitigate somewhat the defects in presentation for which I have already apologized.

The history of the tribal wanderings of this people follows the same lines as that with which we are now familiar. This history is the record of the migrations, not of the tribe *qua* tribe, but of every clan, the composite of which now forms the group called the Talense (s. Talena; language Talene.) The tribal histories, specimens of which are about to be related, tell of the migrations (within comparatively narrow limits of time and space) of the groups which have for some hundreds of years supplied the Territorial Rulers. Of the wanderings of the original people themselves, who are now largely merged with this foreign element, nothing is really known, except that they were undoubtedly of the stock which I have termed the 'Mole group', who seem to

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have been the original inhabitants of these parts for a much longer period than can be claimed for their aristocracy.

The chief Talense 'towns', in the sense with which we are now familiar, are as follows: Tɔngo, Bade, Gorogo, Si, Winduri, Ten'zugu, Tilega, Yamdiga, Biuŋ, Siega, Duse, Datoko, Gbee, Kpantia, Kpale, Wakyiga, Gbeogo, Zandoya, and Gbea. These settlements, including the subjects of the Chief of Kurugu, now constitute the Talense tribe.

History of Tɔngo (as told me by the present Chief, Kpama): 'We (i.e. his ancestors) came from Mampurugu, which we left owing to a quarrel between *Misore* and his younger brother—whose name we do not know—about the Chieftainship. *Misore* left Mampurugu in consequence and came first to Boŋo, thence to Saamere; from there he passed through a dense bush and came to the hills. (The Tɔng hills.) At the foot of these hills we found a people whom our ancestors called Gundugo or Talense. We intermarried with these people and have all become Talense. *Misore* died here; his grave is marked by a big baobab tree. He was succeeded by his son, *Seyene*, who, now that his father was dead, returned to Mampurugu[1] and received from the Chief the Chieftainship of Tɔngo. *Seyene* died, and was succeeded by his brother, *Nambogeda*, who also returned to Mampurugu to ask for the Chieftainship. He died, and was succeeded by his younger brother, *Bɔyayeret*, a son of *Seyene*. About this time, the Chief of Mampurugu made one of his son's Chief of Kurugu, and placed Tɔngo under Kurugu. *Bɔyayeret* was succeeded by his "brother" *Sayepele*, a son of *Seyene*, who reported to Kurugu and held his Chieftainship from that ruler. *Sayepele* was succeeded by his brother *Nodeyene* (lit. Short-fowl). *Nodeyene* was succeeded by his younger brother, *Lebsekora* (Old-things-change). He, in turn, was succeeded by *Kusii* (Worn-out-hoe), a son of *Bɔyayaret*. He was succeeded by *Bileu*, who was succeeded by *Lobsaab* (Throw-away-food), his brother, who, in turn, was succeeded by *Belemsale*, his half-brother, who was succeeded by *Belemboo*, a son of *Kusii*. In his time a great famine came, and many people were sold (to the Dagomba). He was succeeded by *Kabu*, a son of *Lobsaab*. *Lobsaab* was succeeded by *Sapelega* (White-clouds), a half-brother of *Kabu*. *Sapelega* was succeeded by *Kakora*, a son of *Bileu*. He was followed by *Nekay*, a son of *Kusii*; followed by *Paheban*, son of *Belemsale*; *Sagbon* (Dark-cloud), *Lebenwana*, *Bupaa*, son of *Kusii*;

[1] Mampurugu, as we shall see later, was the seat of the Head of the foreign element, who, coming somewhere from the eastward, had founded the empires of Mampruse, Mosi, and Dagomba.

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NAMNAM

XXXVIII

THE NAMNAM

History, Tribal and Clan Organization

101 161 131 THE Namnam (*Anglice* Nabdams) are a tribe numbering 8,063. They inhabit the triangular strip of country bounded on the east by the Red Volta; the Talense lie to the south, the Nankanse on the west. They are among the smallest of the Northern Territory tribes. The people call themselves Namnam (sing. Nabt), the language Nabte, and their country Nabrug. The Namnam call the Kasena, Yuls, and the Nankanse, Gurse; the Kanjagas, Bulse, and the Mampruse and Dagomba, Dagbwan. Specimens of the Nabte language have been given in Chapter III.

103 173 167 563 622 793 The capital town (*teya*) of the head Chief is Nangoot (*Anglice* Nangode). The following history was given me by the head Chief: 'Our first ancestors were called *Loro* and *Zan*. *Zan* is the name of a tree which was this ancestor's *segere*. There was a quarrel about the Chieftainship at Naleruk (Naleregu, near Gambaga) and these ancestors of ours, who were full brothers, left Gambaga and first settled near a place called Gos, in the Kusase country. There was nothing but thorn scrub there, so the place was named Namgoel, "the Chieftainship of thorns". We quarrelled with the Kusase and came here and gave the place its name. When we came here, we found a people who had not any Chiefs, only *Ten'danam* (*Ten'dama*). They spoke the language now called Nabte. Our people followed *Loro*, and *Zan* became the first Chief. He died and is buried here. The people whom we overtook here, we called Namnam. We became their Chiefs. [721] We own the people, the *Ten'danam* own the land. The present *Ten'dan'* is called Biriwanab, his grove (*tengwan*) is known as Dakyirig. The *Ten'dan'* makes sacrifices to the land. *Ten'danam* are like your European doctors. *Zan* was succeeded by *Dyeten*. I think he was *Zan's* son, but it is a long time ago. Each Chief when he dies has a stone which is [778] bathed, rubbed over with shea butter, and kept in the compound of the new Chief in a room. These stones are called *kpwim kuga* (spirit-stones). A sacrifice is made once a year to them. *Dyeten* was succeeded by *Pubuge*. During his time, we heard that the black gun-men (Ashanti?) came with war and reached Akorog (lit. the River). We met them with arrows and had many men taken captive.

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197 Westermann has shown[1] that the Voltaic tribes all speak languages belonging to the *Gur* group of Sudanic languages. The Mossi (or, more accurately, the Mole-Dagbane speaking) group all speak Mole-Dagbane dialects, which form a distinct branch of the *Gur* family. The people of Taleland speak a Dagbane dialect. From Zuarungu northwards Mole influence is linguistically predominant.

171 The cultural uniformity of the Voltaic region is equally strikingly shown in forms of social and economic organization, in custom, belief, and material culture. Though local variations are great and have important sociological implications, as we shall find, the common patterns and contents are obvious.[2]

Among the Voltaic peoples, the Mossi, the Dagomba, and the Mamprusi have centralized forms of political organization of the type common throughout West Africa. The aristocracies of the three nations claim to be kinsfolk descended from conquering immigrants who established themselves first in the country of the Mamprusi and spread northwards and southwards from there. The three paramount chiefs still maintain ceremonial ties accounted for by quasi-mythical traditions of kinship and migration well known in all three countries.

101 619 Between these centralized states stretches a block of tribes which seem to have no political unity. Each so-called tribe appears to be independent of and sporadically at enmity with its neighbours, and there is no overriding central authority. Nor does the tribe seem to have any internal political unity.

● 167 619 648 We owe to Rattray the discovery that these central Voltaic tribes comprise two major groups of communities. On the one side are those that claim to be the descendants of immigrants from parts of the country other than their present habitats. On the other side are communities that claim to be the autochthonous inhabitants. The two groups are found in every tribe, including the Mossi, Mamprusi, and Dagomba, living side by side and indistinguishable from one another by broad cultural or linguistic criteria. Many of the immigrant communities claim descent from forbears of the Mampuru ruling stock. Though now wholly amalgamated with the alleged aboriginal inhabitants, they have certain ritual observances and a system of chiefship similar to those of the Mamprusi. In fact the Paramount Chief of Mampurugu appoints many of their chiefs. But this is symbolical of kinship and ideological ties, not of political suzerainty. For though these communities may be regarded as the distant outliers of the Mampuru social and political structure, they are politically independent of the Mamprusi.

[113]

[1] Westermann, D., *Die westlichen Sudansprachen und ihre Beziehungen zum Bantu*, pp. 121 ff.; and in Rattray, R. S., *Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, chap. iv.

[2] The literature on this area is scanty and of very unequal value. The following are the most informative ethnographical monographs, in order of reliability: Rattray, op. cit.; Delafosse, op. cit.; Labouret, H., *Les Tribus de Rameau Lobi*, Travaux et Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie, Paris, 1931; Tauxier, L., *Les Noirs du Soudan*, Paris, 1912; id., *Les Noirs du Yatenga*, Paris, 1917; Dim Delobsom, A. A., *L'Empire du Mogho-Naba*, Institut de Droit Comparé, Études de Sociologie et d'Ethnologie juridiques, Paris, 1932; Cardinall, A. W., *Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast*, London, 1925.

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in their spare time, and chiefly in the dry season when there is no farm work. They are exceedingly few in numbers—one or two in a settlement—and their work is of mediocre quality. The only blacksmiths in Taleland are about a dozen men of the Sakpee clan of Tenzugu, and only one of them derives a substantial part of his livelihood from his craft. A leather-worker or two, a potteress, a sewer of caps, may be found in almost every settlement. Some men and women who are more skilful than their neighbours at making articles of common use such as hen-coops, baskets, bows, adze-shafts, &c., are in the habit of making a few for sale every dry season. The only specialized occupation is that of the diviner, and it, also, is a part-time occupation in addition to farming, though a popular diviner, making perhaps a shilling or eighteen pence a day, may farm less land than he normally would. Diviners are numerous. There may be as many as ten or twenty in a large settlement, but only one or two of them will earn more than a few pence a day by divining.

British Rule and Contact with Western Civilization

Until the time of my first visit to Taleland the natives had been very little influenced by the agencies of British government and of European civilization that are active in these parts. The main roads skirt Taleland so that the flow of north- and south-bound traffic by-passes the largest part of the area. Nevertheless, these roads have served to open up Taleland to a wider sphere of intercourse with other parts of the Gold Coast than was possible twenty years before. Political and social conditions made it impossible for people to travel freely beyond a radius of a few miles from their own settlements in former days. To-day young men and even women go in increasing numbers every year, in the dry season, to Tamale, Kumasi, or the coast towns. Some go to visit friends or relatives, some carry fowls for sale, others go as seasonal labourers, and others go to work abroad for a term of years. In 1923 the Administration of the Northern Territories reluctantly agreed to assist in the recruitment of labour for the mines and cocoa farms of Ashanti and the colony. The experiment failed and was soon abandoned. Nowadays labour migration from the Northern Territories is entirely voluntary. It has become linked up with the normal economic life of the natives. Whereas, in former years, a young man moved out temporarily to the periphery of settlement on account of a shortage of land in his natal community, nowadays he often goes to Ashanti or the mines as a labourer. The cessation of agricultural activity in the dry season makes it easy for a young man to get away for a few months without loss to the routine of farming.

Economic incentives, which the natives sum up as 'the desire for money', therefore lie behind much labour migration in the Northern Territories. And the value of money may be gauged from the fact that a hen could be bought for 6*d.* to 1*s.*, a cow in good condition for £2. 10*s.*, and a dish of porridge enough for a satisfying meal for 1/10 of a penny in any market in 1934–7. But there are other incentives as well. Curiosity, and the desire to see the places and experience the life which those who return from a stay abroad describe to their fellows at home, stimulate many a youth to go south for a short or long period. And friction with

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relatives may impel a young man to run away to 'Kumasi', the symbol for everything south of the Black Volta.

Thus one finds that about one man in three has at some time or other in the past two decades visited these, to the Tallensi, still foreign parts. In the settlements near the main roads the dry-season migration of young men may, according to rough estimates made in 1936–7, reach over 10 per cent. of the adult male population. Administrative officers estimate that in 1938–9 about 7 per cent. of the adult male population of Taleland were working abroad with the apparent intention of staying away for a lengthy period. These men bring back small sums of money, ranging from a few shillings to four or five pounds, as well as clothes and other miscellaneous trade goods. Money and clothes[1] are eagerly desired by the Tallensi. These are the most important new wants that have grown up recently as a result of culture contact. Foreign utensils, implements, or tools have hardly entered the productive system of the natives. The foreign ideas and exotic information brought back by the young men arouse curiosity but have made no appreciable impression on the native scheme of values and beliefs, or on their practical knowledge. Labour migrants remain strongly attached to their families and natal settlements, and it is always assumed that they will eventually return. Hitherto, among the Tallensi, very few have been lost to their natal communities; and when they do return, they resume the traditional way of life. Though they are one of the influences modifying the strict letter of custom in minor respects, they are not a disintegrating ferment

[1] Tallensi maintain that there has been a tremendous increase in the amount of clothes worn since the white man opened up the country, and especially since the last war. They point out that nowadays every small boy has a loin-cloth for festive occasions, whereas even twenty years ago a youth only obtained one when he began courting, at the age of 18 or 19. In those days the ordinary man rarely had a cloth or tunic. His only garb was an animal skin. Nowadays every man has at least one cloth to cover himself at night and to wear during the day when he is not working, and many have two or three garments—a cloth and a tunic, for instance—while well-to-do men have considerable wardrobes. All cotton goods are imported. The Mossi cloth used in former days is still a favourite, especially for loin-cloths and caps, and tunics for special wear. The bulk of it is still imported from French territory, but there are some Mossi weavers at Bolɔga and Zuarungu who add to the supply. However, quite half if not more of the cotton goods worn by Tallensi is of European origin and the demand is increasing. I once listed all the clothes worn by a number of men and women from one of the most prosperous communities of Taleland as they passed my rest house on the way to the market. The figures are instructive as an indication both of the standard of living of the Tallensi and of the degree to which acculturation in this sphere has progressed. The sample consisted of 62 men and 64 women. Of the men, 35 (56 per cent.) wore cover-cloths of European cotton print; 18 (29 per cent.) wore Mossi cloths; 9 (15 per cent.) wore skins; 8 (13 per cent.) wore khaki shorts, several of them on top of native loin-cloths; the remainder wore native loin-cloths; 19 (30 per cent.) wore some form of European head-gear; 30 (48 per cent.) wore native-made caps. Thus 85 per cent. of these men were clothed, but none of them wholly. Of the women 12 (15 per cent.) wore a piece of cotton print and one wore a Mossi cloth—a very large incidence such as would not be found in most other Tale communities. The rest were nude, except for the perineal band and back-flap. As people dress up specially for market day, these figures are not indicative of everyday habits. The greater conservatism of women suggested by these figures is due in great part to their lack of opportunities for obtaining cash incomes for personal use.

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177 in the native social order. Apart from money and clothes, the material
● 167 articles, habits, and ideas which they have acquired abroad soon decay from disuse, or come to serve for ostentation only, since they have no functional relevance to the economic life and social structure of the native society.

178 The Tallensi, in short, still preserve the culture bequeathed to them by their forefathers and the social structure of their own, homogeneous society. Their economy is a primitive, static, subsistence economy. They continue to farm by the same methods and with the same tools and the same knowledge as their forefathers had. They grow no cash crops and produce no surplus of local crops for sale outside Taleland. The introduction of British currency and the opening up of the country have accelerated local exchange and slightly mitigated the hardship of winning a living by primitive technical methods from a soil of no great fertility. They have not otherwise affected the livelihood of 99 per cent. of the people.

797 Literacy and Christianity had, until 1936, barely touched the Tallensi.
872 A few children had been sent to school reluctantly in deference to the commands of the District Commissioners. Only one stayed the course and left school with a moderate command of English and the three R's. Two or three younger boys were still at school at Gambaga or Tamale. The nearest mission station to the Tallensi is that of the White Fathers at Bolaga, outside Taleland. Up to 1936 the missionaries had made only an occasional visit of reconnaissance to the nearby Tale settlements. They had succeeded in attracting only two or three Tale youths to their school. These were the sons of two ambitious, and, from the native point of view, upstart headmen who were keen to have their sons taught the white man's skills the better to serve their own political ambitions. The only one of these youths who achieved a fair degree of literacy and accepted the Christian faith was in Government employment.

177 Most of the social changes that have occurred and are taking place with
636 increasing rapidity in Taleland are due to a single powerful extraneous
648 factor, British rule. The Tallensi, in common with other tribes of these parts, put up a truculent resistance to British rule at first, and had to be subjugated by military operations and other punitive measures. The last pocket of Tale resistance, in the Tong Hills, was finally broken by a small armed force in 1911. The people of the Hills were expelled from their ancestral homes, which were razed to the ground, and lived in exile on the plains at the foot of the hills until they were permitted to return in 1935. Judging by the scanty memoranda of the Administrative officers of the decade 1911–21, the Tallensi gave them a good deal of trouble.

609 These events are still vividly remembered by the natives. Their fear
636 and suspicion of the white man was not unnatural since they had never before met him. However, their subjugation and the subsequent imposition of peace have produced in them a deep respect for the might and power of the white man. They have since learnt to have complete confidence in the justice and good intentions of the Administrative officers. They speak with gratitude of the benefits which the white man's peace

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621 166 184 people from Tongo and Zoo settle at Gbambee, which is only an overflow settlement, irrespective of kinship or lineage relationships, usually on land formerly utilized by their forefathers as bush farms.

621 182 178 Elastic as it is, the social boundary between Tongo and Zoo has not disappeared. This is shown in the effort made by the people of Zoo, during the past two generations, to resist being swallowed up politically by Tongo. To preserve the autonomous status of the chiefship of Biuŋ, which is vested in the Zoo Namoos, the chiefs of Biuŋ now reside there permanently instead of at Zoo, as in former times. It is evident, also, from the recognition by leading men of both groups, that they are now more closely united than in the days of their fathers. They describe this as part of the general trend towards wider political consolidation, both within clans and between neighbouring communities, 'since the white man tamed us (*nasaara m-maa ti*)'. They commonly quote a trivial but telling sign of this. Nowadays one often finds a group of Zoo boys pasturing their cattle side by side with a group of young cattle herds from Tongo, and playing amicably with them. 'When I was a boy', a Zoo elder [578] said, 'this never happened. The Tongo children were strangers to us, and our fathers used to warn us not to go near them, for we always used to fight and that would cause bad blood.'

621 Between Tongo and Gbeog dwells the numerically small (they number under fifty males) but socially powerful maximal lineage of Gbizug. A social boundary, intermediate in character between that which separates Tongo from Zubiuŋ and that which demarcates it from the Hill Talis, runs between it and Gbizug. They are more distinctly separated, territorially, than Tongo and Zubiuŋ, yet so closely contiguous that constant friendly intercourse and mutual assistance is a regular feature of the relations of members of the two units with one another. At the same time, the cleavage in terms of descent, ritual observances, and jural interests goes deeper than with Zubiuŋ. Gbizug is closely allied to the Hill Talis and Ba'ari by ties of clanship, politico-ritual collaboration, and common ritual values. It is also bound to Tongo by inescapable ties of politico-ritual interdependence and mutual constraint. This accentuates the social boundary between them. The politico-ritual function of Gbizug is to hold the balance between Tongo and the Hill Talis. It stands aloof in their disputes, taking neither side, for it belongs equally to both and wholly to neither. Thus, important ceremonial events at Gbizug are attended both by representatives of Tongo and by representatives of the adjacent Hill Talis clans and Ba'ari, though the former take a more distant, passive, and extraneous part in them than the latter.

621 166 167 We have mentioned Gbambee, a settlement of about 25 to 30 homesteads straggling over a row of stony hillocks alongside a great stretch of low-lying bush, most of it uncultivable, which lies just beyond Zoo. This is regarded as merely an outpost of Tongo and Zoo, where the younger men, who are most handicapped by the scarcity of land at home, can find an economic outlet. Hence a man may live there for many years, grow old and die there, but he is generally brought back to Tongo or Zoo for burial among his ancestors. There are many indications, however, that Gbambee will soon become stabilized as a permanent settlement.

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A small number of Tongo people have gone yet farther afield in search of a livelihood: to Biuŋ and other peripheral settlements, to Mampurugu, and, increasingly in recent years, to the tempting Eldorado of Ashanti and the Colony. Thus, not all the members of the Tongo branch of Mosuor biis and its accessory lineages live at Tongo at any given time; but within its confines live only members of the sub-clan and their families; and for all members of the sub-clan, wherever they may be living, Tongo is their home, the centre of gravity of their social existence.

We have said before that no two Tale settlements are exactly alike. Allowing for specific differences, however, the local and social circumscription of Tongo may be taken as typical. The general rule is that boundaries exist in terms of social cleavages co-ordinated with residential distribution, and not of geographical or topographical features; and this rule applies both to the spatial relations of contiguous settlements and to those of parts of a settlement with one another. Community and locality cannot be dissociated. The maxim, 'A *teŋ* is not a *teŋ* if there are no people in it', always cited to explain the strong sense of ethical obligation felt by the natives to accept a suitable immigrant in any community, if land is available, sums this up. The boundary disputes that have become common between chiefs and headmen in recent years turn on the contradiction between the conception of a defined territorial boundary fostered by British rule, and the type of social boundary inherent in the native social structure.

A revealing case occurred among the Hill Talis. The elaborate interlocking of the Hill Talis clans with one another through clanship ties, ritual collaboration, local cohesion, and political loyalties, and the diffused solidarity to which this gives rise, impel them to common or mutually supporting action in crises. Yet even among them, social boundaries divide clan from clan and maximal lineage from maximal lineage both spatially and structurally, and come into operation in certain situations. But these social boundaries are far less firm than those between Tongo and its neighbours. Groups of contiguous clans cohere to nearly the same extent as a genealogically organic community like Tongo. Tenzugu, in particular, and Yinduuri-Zandoya, form two such close-knit sub-communities within the wider community of all the Hill Talis.

Since 1936 a boundary dispute has embittered the relations of the Golibdaana and the Yinduurna'aba, who are recognized by the Administration as headman of Tenzugu and headman of Yinduur-Zandoya respectively. It is an insoluble dispute, bound to remain a chronic source of friction as long as these two headmen exercise the territorially defined powers entrusted to them by the Administration.

The dispute concerns a segment of Zandoya living on the slope of the Hills between Yinduuri and Tenzugu. It was at length, after many evasions on the Golibdaana's part, brought before the Chief of Tongo for arbitration. But this ended, inevitably, in a deadlock. The Golibdaana, crafty and overweening, as only a man of his extravagant wealth and unyielding temper could be, when he knew himself to be in the wrong, took his stand on a criterion often used by Administrative officers in such disputes. The group in question, he claimed, was living on land that

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clan must not kill one another or abduct one another's wives, so they must not trespass on one another's land. For this would wreck the mutual loyalties of segment to segment and make impossible the maintenance of the reciprocity of rights and duties on which their corporate life depends. There is, in other words, a generally accepted body of jural and moral norms, binding on all members of the clan and cementing its solidarity, and supported by the powerful sanctions of the ancestor cult and the Earth cult. The security of land tenure is guaranteed by this.

Tallensi say that it is unthinkable for any man to take another's farm-land. It is his ancestral land. You would not borrow a patch for a ground-nut plot without his permission: how could you think of seizing any of it for yourself? The idea is either fantastic or simply ludicrous to them. And in fact, disputes over farm boundaries or trespassing on another's land are almost unknown. The most remarkable proof of this occurred in 1936, when the Hill Talis returned to their ancestral homes after twenty-five years of exile. Several hundred men took possession again of their ancestors' farm plots without a single boundary dispute. If there was doubt about a particular plot the elders were consulted and settled the matter, not by the exercise of authority but by reason of their knowledge of where every member of the clan had farmed in the old days. Boys of thirteen or fourteen know in detail the ownership and boundaries of every farm plot in the settlement, or at any rate in their section, if it is a large settlement.

It should be noted that there is no communal production for communal use of foodstuffs or any other commodities among the Tallensi, and there is, accordingly, no concept of the communal ownership of the farm-lands of the community. A nuclear lineage has indefeasible rights of ownership over its land. No one has an over-right over it, either real or fictitious. This rule applies between clans as well as within the clan. Trespassing on the farm-lands of members of clans other than one's own is unheard of. For, as we have learnt, adjacent clans are interconnected by structural ties. Every clan is a member of a wider community of interdependent clans, emerging at the level of politico-ritual relations and including, at its widest extent, all the Tallensi. This is the *tey* at its widest extent, symbolically recognized in the Great Festivals and in the chain of interdependent politico-ritual offices held by the heads of all the different maximal lineages and clans. It is the counterpart, in the social structure, of the notion of the Earth in its mystical aspect as a universal power acting on the lives of all men.

Security of land ownership, which means security for every man of the opportunity to supply the basic needs of himself and his dependants, is, therefore, conditional upon the integration of the community; in the first place, of the clan, but also of the wider community of interdependent groups of clans. Its ultimate basis is the politico-ritual organization of the Tallensi.

The Integration of the Community: Chiefship and Tendaanaship

The politico-ritual integration of a Tale clan is focused in the politico-ritual office or offices vested in it or in its component maximal lineages.

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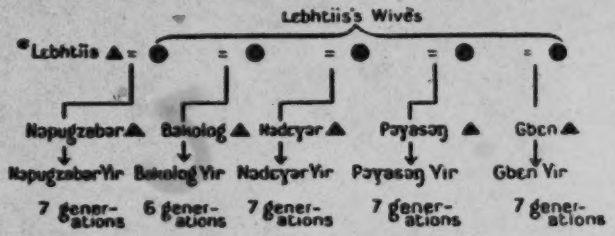
Diagrammatically, the agnatic filiation of the branches of Lɛbhtiis yir (or biis) can be represented as follows:



These five segments form a set of co-ordinate segments, all except Bakolog yidɛm reckoning seven generations inclusively between their present lineage heads and their common ancestor, Lɛbhtiis. Their corporate unity and common interests are symbolized by the ancestor shrine dedicated to the 'fathers' (*banam*) of the lineage, culminating in Lɛbhtiis. This is the *bɔyar* of Lɛbhtiis, the *banam bɔyar* (shrine of the forefathers) held by the head (*kpeem*) of the whole lineage, who may be a member of any of the five *dugɔt*. In 1934 the head of Lɛbhtiis yidɛm, Naandɔmər, who was also head of his own segment of Nɔpugzabər yiri died, and as his final funeral rites were not immediately performed, the *banam bɔyar* remained in the custody of his son, who carried out the duties of head of the whole lineage in his late father's name. Naandɔmər's prospective successor as *kpeem* of Lɛbhtiis yir was Yinyɛla, the *kpeem* of Bakolog yir.

Each segment also has its particular *dugni bɔyar* (shrine of the 'room'). This, as will be explained presently, is known as its 'mothers'' *bɔyar* (*manam bɔyar*)—the shrine of its eponymous founding ancestor among the sons of Lɛbhtiis, and his mother—the symbol of its differentiation, by reference to maternal origin, from its brother (*sunzɔ*) segments of the same descent, and of its specific corporate unity and identity in contraposition to those other segments.

Each segment tends to form a coherent residential cluster, situated on land which has been owned by its members for several generations, and in close proximity to the graves of their ancestors. The lineage as a whole tends to form a local aggregate, though a somewhat looser one than any of its segments. But not all the members of the lineage reside in Puhug, or at Tongo, at a given time. There are its married *pɔyayabəlis* (women members) and absent male members. In Nɔpugzabər yiri two young men were away in 1934, one farming in Mampurugu, another working somewhere in the colony; three of the younger 'sons' of Bakolog yir were away at Kumasi, where they had been for several years. One subsegment of Pɔyasɔŋ yidɛm has been established at Yamələg for a generation or so; and several members of the other two segments were away in Mampurugu and Ashanti.

Numerically Nɔdɛyər yir is exceptionally small, for it has only eleven male members. The other segments have between twenty and thirty male members each, counting infants as well. Numbers, we must again emphasize, do not in any way affect the status of a lineage or the rights

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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nephews but more distant cognatic and even affinal kin frequently live with a kinsman until they can set up in their own homesteads.

Sometimes, too, an unmarried sister's child (*tau-bii*) may grow up and live in its uncle's family. It may be an illegitimate child (*yi yeem bii*—a maiden's child), or one whose mother's bride-price was not paid, and who therefore belongs to her father unless or until it is redeemed (*pɔhəg*) by the payment of a cow by its genitor or his heir. A sister's child is to all intents and purposes a child of the family. But not being of the true agnatic line, it is subject to certain jural disabilities which have no consequence for a girl but handicap a boy, as we have previously seen.

The domestic families of chiefs and headmen are unusual only in respect of size. Their newly won riches enable chiefs and headmen to acquire numerous wives and to maintain households that appear enormous in the eyes of the ordinary man. A petty headman may have ten or more wives. The late Chief of Tongo, a chief of modest means compared with some of his peers in Taleland, had more than thirty. The Golibdaana of Tenzugu has at least eighty. The Chief of Datoko is reputed to have a hundred, but he denies this and claims to have only a modest fifty. Except that their domestic economy and organization is more complex and that there is at times more friction between the womenfolk, these hypertrophied joint families have the same pattern of organization as those of ordinary folk.

It is noteworthy that this pattern has not been disturbed by the social changes which have, in recent years, followed the subjection of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast to European political, economic, and cultural influences. Family disorganization has barely begun to appear in Taleland. There is hardly a domestic family in the country—not one in our sample—which has wholly escaped the effects of these contact influences. One or more of their members is or has been abroad in Mampurugu, Ashanti, or the Colony, for longer or shorter periods of time, farming, working for wages, or trading. But the number of men abroad, at any given time, for very long periods is relatively small[1] compared with other parts of West and Southern Africa, and their absence has little effect on the structure of the residual family. Their labour is lost to the family, but as they are no longer a drain on its resources this does not upset its internal economy. Similarly, as they are mostly young men[2] with little or no responsibility for the management of family

[1] Estimates based on my own census material and on Nominal Rolls drawn up by Administrative Officers for tax collection show that an average of just under 7 per cent. of the adult male population of Taleland were away from home and not likely to return in the immediate future, in the years 1936 to 1939. This estimate may be compared with the 60–80 per cent. of able-bodied adult males absent from tribal reserves in Northern Rhodesia and Nyassaland quoted by Lord Hailey, *African Survey*, p. 701.

[2] Reliable information on the ages of these absentees cannot be obtained. But from personal contact with many of them, both on their return home and

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affairs, their absence does not disturb jural or ritual relations centred in the family. It is like a tree which remains a tree morphologically and physiologically even if some of its minor branches have been lopped off.

The foregoing is true of the great majority of Tale families. The structure of the normal family can still be accurately described without reference to contact influence, in spite of the fact that a few families can be found in every settlement which have been badly mutilated by the prolonged absence abroad of their male members. Admittedly the norms of family relations have not remained completely insulated from these influences. With the ease of modern communications and the openings for work abroad, young people have incentives and opportunities which their fathers never had for resisting the authority of their elders and for breaking away from the family for a longer or shorter time. But as yet these new incentives and opportunities appear only as modifying factors in the play of the culturally defined family relations. They do not represent a conflicting set of norms, creating divisions within Tale society. For instance, a young man who is still jurally a minor cannot at will leave the domestic family to which he belongs by birth and set up an independent household. He can do so only in compliance with the moral rules and social conventions that regulate the fission of families. In fact, the motive to break away will only arise when certain standard changes take place in the composition of the domestic unit to which he belongs, or when he reaches a stage of social maturity which precipitates certain standard tensions between him and the head of the unit. The alternative for a young man who, in these days, hankers after independence is to leave the community until such time as he is prepared to settle down. He has to seek work abroad, in Ashanti or the Colony, or in the service of the white man nearer home. He is assured of a cordial welcome home whenever he decides to return, whether it be for a few weeks only or permanently. But if he makes up his mind to settle down at home it can only be within the existing social framework, and this means complying with the norms of family organization. There is no other way by which he can get married or acquire a house site or farm-land in his natal settlement, let alone play his part in community affairs. Hitherto these norms have been so well maintained that no returned emigrant has been known to flout them.

Summing up, we see that the Tale domestic system has three morphological strata. It consists of a segmentary economic formation—households of different dimensions and degrees of economic self-sufficiency—embraced within a segmentary jural and ceremonial formation—domestic units not necessarily congruent with households grouped under family heads—and this again contained within a system of residential grouping in which the changes of phase in domestic structure are crystallized.

in places like Kumasi, I can say with certainty that the great majority are under 30.

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593 in illness. She is mainly responsible for their training in habits of cleanliness. She also has to teach her daughters housekeeping skills.

This formal summary is interposed here as a means of orientating our analysis. The reality, we shall find, is not so simple.

Classificatory Parents and Own Parents

593 855 736 Tallensi affirm that no one can wholly take the place of a person's own parents. A child may be brought up by its dead father's brother or dead mother's co-wife. Outwardly there is nothing to distinguish the relationship of such a child, during its pre-adolescent years, to its proxy parent from that of a child living with its natural parent. Men or women point with pride and affection to orphans in their custody as 'my children'. They claim to care for them as conscientiously and devotedly as for their own children. But, the natives say, there is always something lacking; and observation shows that the affective ties of proxy parent and child are much weaker than those of natural parent and child. Sometimes, indeed, there is an acknowledged emotional barrier between them.

One can see this in young children like Gundaat, whose story is told in a previous chapter (p. 130). A young child is more restrained, more formal, with a proxy parent than with a natural parent. Boys seem to be less amenable to proxy parents than to own parents, especially as they approach adulthood. When young men who have been abroad, [107] working in Ashanti or the Colony for a period of years, are questioned about their motives for leaving home, the commonest reason they give is the death of a parent. 'My father (*ba*) died, and my junior father (*ba-pit*) took over the house (*die yir*) and so I went away', is the usual formula. One soon discovers that there was always some tension and often friction between the youth and his father's brother. The youth says that his *ba-pit* did not treat him properly; and when one questions his *ba-pit*, he usually says 'the boy did not respect (*nan*) me'. This is a modern development of what is a deeply ingrained feature of Tale social organization. A man will often continue to live and farm with his own father until the latter's death. I know men of 40 and over who are still living with their own fathers. But very rarely does this happen with a father's brother. A dead man's sons break away from the parental home when a father's brother inherits it as soon as they are able to. In such a case there is usually a convergence of different factors of segmentary differentiation in the lineage. The emotional cleavage serves as the catalyst that directs and accelerates the normal processes of splitting along economic and structural lines of cleavage.

This is the negative aspect of the idea that one's natural parents should be one's social parents, as it appears in the classificatory extension of the parent–child relationship. On the positive side it follows from this conception that all those who are socially identifiable with

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even mother and daughter, and hence, perhaps, Tallensi do not have such a definite conventional rationalization of their attitudes towards the mother. They say you respect your mother and cherish her in old age because she bore and fed you. In childhood you were more attached to her than to your father; you ran to her whenever you were tired or hungry or ill and she comforted and fed you; as an adult you realize the importance of 'father's begetting' (*ba-dɔŋam*) in jural, ritual, and economic matters such as marriage or landowning, and in crises like sickness or death; but your mother is still honoured as the centre of your domestic arrangements if you are a man, and if you are a woman, she is the one person you can always come to in sickness or trouble, in the certainty of loving attention. Comfort, emotional security, and food—these are the distinguishing qualities of a mother in Tale thought. It corresponds to the more personal character of the bonds between mother and child, by contrast with the jurally and ritually weighted ties with the father.

Tallensi say that one must respect one's living parents; but to one's dead parents one owes reverence and submission in surpassing degree. That is what the proverb 'Fear the dead and do not fear the living' means to them.[1] One can defy a living parent sometimes and rely on being forgiven; one cannot defy a dead parent. One can live without the help of a living parent, if necessary, but not without the mystical protection of one's dead parents.

In the religious practice of the Tallensi the ancestors exercise their powers without compunction. They punish and slay as arbitrarily as they bless. Every dry season men return to rebuild their parental homes which have been allowed to lie in decay for many years. They come from Mampurugu, from outlying parts of Taleland, or from Ashanti and the Colony. Some have been away for years. Pal of Zubiuŋ had a prosperous farm in Mampurugu, where he had gone to settle on being discharged from the regiment after the war of 1914–18. During his fifteen years in Mampurugu he had become fairly wealthy, with five wives, a horse, several head of cattle, and a quantity of good clothes. Dema of Tenzugu, who joined the regiment as far back as 1912 and had lived in Ashanti as a trader since his discharge after the war, was obviously a man of considerable wealth by Tale standards. Both returned to rebuild their fathers' homesteads in 1935–6. They told the same story. Wives and children had died; there had been repeated bouts of sickness in the family; other misfortunes had piled up over the years; and all, as the diviners declared, because they had 'rejected (*zaŋah*) their fathers (*banam*)' by remaining in foreign parts. It did not matter much while there were older brothers at home to 'give water (*zaŋ kuom ti*)', that is, make sacrifices, to the ancestral shrines. But

[1] The verb *zo*, to fear, has a wide range of meaning and here it means to show respect towards, to revere, to stand in awe of.

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769 when they were left as heads of their lineage segments they had to come
577 home. Their fathers' spirits would have killed them if they had not
•167 done so. Dema is frankly happy to be home again amongst his own people after his wanderings. Pal, who is dependent on farming for his living, still speaks with a tinge of regret of the fine farm he had to abandon in Mampurugu. But he feels that he had no option, and there is even an element of pride in his submission to the *force majeure* of his dead father, since he is now the head of his lineage segment. It was the same with Na'abzə, Kayar, Yinworəb, Baŋgam-Teroog, and many others, too numerous to mention, who returned home after years abroad in order to 'give water' to their fathers.

769 While the whole ancestor cult is an elaborate expression of filial piety
577 towards the dead parents, one of the commonest ways in which the observer comes across it is in the practice of leechcraft. Almost every
757 native owns some 'roots (*ŋaɣa*)' for the treatment of sickness, and the therapeutic value of the roots lies not so much in their physical properties as in the fact that their owner is able, by right of ownership, to mobilize magical virtue in their support. As a preliminary to the curative rites the owner of the roots always calls upon his or her ancestors for a blessing, and this opens with the phrase 'My father, I shall call you (first). You have no concern with this matter, but I call on you (to help me) for the sake of begetting, because you begot me (*Mba, n-na mbuola nyɛni. Nyɛn baha ka dɛni, ka mbuoli la dɔɣam la zug, nyɛn dɔɣəm la zugu*).'

577 Naturally the ritual aspect of filial piety is of greater importance for
593 a man than for a woman, considered in terms of their social personalities and with regard to the father; for he stands for the lineage and clan,
769 with all that membership of these units implies, for the land and other patrimonial property, and for the ancestral home (*daboog*). But it is important for a woman, too, and in relation to the mother as well. A woman is the spiritual ward (*sɛɣəraan*) of one of her paternal forbears and remains under that ancestor's or ancestress's guardianship all her life. And it is through her father that she maintains good ritual relations with her ancestor guardian—either through sacrifices made by her father on her behalf or through the intermediation of her father's spirit when he is dead. Moreover, her father's spirit is of great importance
[782] to her children. It is significant that if a male line dies out a female survivor takes on the duty of sacrificing to the lineage shrines, which she can only approach through her father's spirit.

A man's mother's spirit is of as much importance for him as an individual as his father's. He has a shrine dedicated to her and other shrines dedicated to ancestors of hers. A mother's shrine is often the first after his *Yin* shrine to be dedicated by a man and is always felt to be more peculiarly his own than a father's shrine, which is heritable by half-brothers. A man would not return from abroad because of the demands

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593 pronounced the ominous words, 'You will see'. In an hour or two Mosuor's temper cooled off and he began to feel uneasy over the enormity of his offence. His father had uttered what amounted to a curse; and before the day was out he had called on one of his father's oldest friends to ask him to go and beg Naabdiya's forgiveness for him.

593 421 We have seen in a previous chapter that as a son grows older and his conjugal family increases, his desire for independence grows stronger, owing to the increasing wants of his wife and children. But it is not easy for a son to obtain his father's permission to set up on his own. It may take five or six years of pressure on the son's part before the old man gives way. A son only desires to go out on his own if he has younger brothers who will remain at home to work for his father—there would be no motive if he were the only son. When these younger brothers marry the pressure on the common resources of the household grows and it becomes expedient to disperse temporarily. Economic separation does not remove a son from his father's authority. He can be and often is called upon to help with the work on his father's land; his property still belongs formally to his father. Indeed, any sheep, goats, and cattle he may acquire by his industry or receive for a daughter's bride-price are housed in his father's homestead and not in his.

593 ●167 Nowadays a common form of independent labour and enterprise by young men is to go south for a season or longer. The chief economic stimulus for this is the desire for money to buy clothes or to make certain of the payment of bride-price for a wife. A father is not bound to provide his sons—or any other dependant—with clothes. These young men go in the dry season carrying crates of fowls to sell or seeking 'white man's work'. The youths who go at other times of the year are often stealing away without permission. But in the dry season, when farm work is at a standstill, a man will often give his sons permission to go south until the rains commence. Some men do so very readily in the hope that the boys will bring back money and 'things'. Others are still reluctant to let their sons go off, even for a short while, lest they should be tempted to stay away for a long time. Tallensi say that the freedom of movement of to-day is undermining parental authority. They say that if a man is severe with his sons, as he has every right to be, they simply run away and go south. Hence the men who think that working abroad spoils a youth or who cherish the ideal of keeping the family together all through their life, and therefore try to restrain their sons from going south, have to be tactful in handling them. Observation shows that it is usually the wise and considerate father, the man who manages his family well, who succeeds in restraining his sons from making long sojourns abroad. Where there is much friction between father and son, the son is apt to find a way out by going south; and, as we have mentioned, the likelihood of a son's leaving home is increased if one or both of his own parents are dead and he is living with

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a proxy parent. As is natural, fathers and sons take different views of this situation. Sons do not think that they are showing a lack of filial loyalty when they go abroad. For, they argue, it is only a temporary absence and the money they earn will eventually accrue, in part at least, to the family exchequer. As has been mentioned previously, no man ever turns away a son who comes home from abroad, whether he brings any goods and money or not; and a son who does bring back 'things' and money is doubly welcome.

We said earlier that a father owns all his son's property. This might seem to contradict what was said about the independent ownership by a son of the livestock he acquires by breeding from a gift hen or by other means. The Tallensi themselves do not admit a contradiction in this. They see it as an instance of the gradation of rights and duties that is distinctive of their whole social organization. A father's over-right entitles him to veto his son's using his own property in ways that seem extravagant; but it would be an injustice rightfully resented by the son if he were stopped from using his fowl or goat or sheep for purposes that public opinion considers legitimate. Thus everybody would agree that a father who forbade a son from using his own fowls and guinea-fowls in his courtship, or from selling his own ground-nuts in order to buy a cloth, would be acting unfairly. The case of Kpana-Tee's grandson (p. 195) illustrates this principle.

The rights of a father and the rights of a son in the son's property are reconciled by the principle of reciprocity. If a man makes use of his son's goat or sheep he should, in due course, make an equivalent return; for example, by using one of his own sheep or goats to do something for the son. This object is immediately achieved if the son's property is used for the son's benefit, as in the payment of bride-price. There is no book-keeping, but in the long run the son should feel that the gains he has received are commensurate with the amount of his own property that has been used up. A proxy father should be more careful in this regard than a man's own father. A proxy father is less concerned about the future of his 'son' than the latter's own father would be and is therefore sometimes inclined to take selfish advantage of his paternal authority. Though they have no alternative but to submit, young men deeply resent unfairness of this sort, whether on the part of their own father or on that of a proxy father; and this may be the first stimulus to their determination to set up on their own.

This is epitomized in one of the reasons Tallensi regularly produce when they are asked why young men secede from their paternal households. They say: 'It is because of hens and eggs.' Every man has at least a hen or two, even if he has nothing else, and, as we know, his hen symbolizes the starting-point of his accumulation of property. But hens lay their eggs anywhere and this gives rise to petty quarrels. Anybody who finds an egg claims it and another member of the family may dispute

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888 577 593 support an old father economically. They assume support of an old father to follow automatically from the economic and jural relations of parents and children and from the moral obligations of filial piety. It is simply an aspect of co-operative production and joint consumption in the household under the household head's management, and a result of the principle of reciprocity. If a man's only son, for example, were living in his native settlement and refused to have his father or proxy father in his homestead, it would be a monstrous breach of ethics. He would lay himself open to immediate punishment by the ancestors; he would, indeed, be unable to participate in the life of the community since he could not act for himself in ritual or jural affairs.

888 593 577 •167 This is an hypothetical instance, for I know of no such case. But nowadays the question of supporting an aged parent does occasionally arise when men emigrate from their native settlements to seek work abroad or to farm outside Taleland. Cases are occurring of men who stay away abroad and postpone their return home from year to year, leaving an aged parent to struggle on alone. They are far from numerous —I knew of some six or seven only, counting two cases where the sons had genuine grounds for their absence.

Native opinion about these absentees is illuminating. They are not criticized for neglecting to send money home regularly. Tallensi do not expect regular remittances from relatives working abroad and still tend to regard the occasional remittances that are sent home as windfalls. Absentee sons are censured rather for deserting their parents, for leaving them without the companionship and the social support of a son. Tendaan Teroog's son used to send baskets of guinea corn and maize to his father from Mampurugu. Nevertheless, the old man kept pressing him to return home; and when the son died suddenly people said it was because he had 'rejected' (*zaŋah*) his father. He should have come home long ago to be his father's companion (*kɔŋal*, vb.), to act for him in jural matters, assist him in ritual activities, and manage the household for him. The same sentiment was uppermost in Maantiya's mind when he explained why he could not leave his proxy father Saantarəba, though the latter was able to support himself and his wife with occasional assistance from kinsmen. Maantiya went down to the coast every dry season carrying fowls to sell and usually stayed away three or four months. He was always home again before the rains began. He said: 'I cannot abandon my father. He has no one else.' When I was going home in 1937 a number of men asked me to find their absent sons in Kumasi or Accra or elsewhere in the south, and to try to persuade them to return home. 'Tell them', said one old man, 'that we do not care about the money or things, but we want them to come home.'

888 593 577 We have said that there is a more definite emphasis on the duty of a son to provide for his mother. There was an old woman at Kpata'ar whose only son had been abroad for some years. She sent him many

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Nevertheless, although a shortage of cultivated foods does not necessarily mean starvation, it lowers resistance to disease and saps the energy of the people at the end of the dry season when they need strength to prepare their farms; thus setting up a "vicious circle". It is not the shortage of food in itself which is so arresting, however, as the apathy of the people to the shortage. Ancestor worship causes them to dwell in the past and to think insufficiently of the present and the future. This, too, is probably symptomatic of the unsettled conditions when only the past was certain. It will take some time for the people, the older people who control affairs especially, to adjust themselves to the swift developments going on around them. An unfortunate result is that during the period of adjustment, many of the young men are attracted away from the district to work for wages in Ashanti and the Colony, where there is a big demand for unskilled labour in the mines and in handling the cocoa crop. These young men do not as a rule stay away from home for long at a time, and usually return with a little money; but they do not take readily to farming again, and represent a floating population which is the source of considerable concern to their elders.

Economic Awakening.

An adequate food supply alone does not appear to be sufficient incentive for the adoption of better farming methods; and it is unlikely that changes will come until farming ceases to be regarded mainly as a custom, and becomes a business. There are many signs of an economic awakening, fostered by such factors as a growing desire of the people for imported commodities, and an increase in money consciousness; the completion of an all-weather road to the South; the opening of a gold mine at Nangodi; the developing trade in all classes of livestock with Ashanti and the Colony; the new trade in groundnuts from Bawku for the Kumasi market; together with the work of Government Departments in the improvement of human health, the health of livestock, and not least, the scope of the recently introduced Native Administrations. These are some of the factors helping to bring about a change which can be met only by better farming. Government must anticipate agricultural expansion to be in a position to control its development.

The first problem, obviously, is to ensure a sufficiency of food for everyone in every year. Then, when local requirements have been satisfied, it must be shown how a surplus can be disposed of profitably, to satisfy growing demands. Upon this the Department of Agriculture is working in North Mamprusi, and the results of the last four years' work form the basis of this bulletin.